REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, and 12 are pending in the present application. Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 11 have been canceled and claim 12 has been added. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims; the objection is respectfully traversed. Although claims 4 and 9 have been canceled, drawing 5 clearly shows first and second linkages, both indicated by reference character 50, pivotally connected to the first and second front slide rails.

The drawings were further objected to for failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "12" was used to designate brackets. The objection is respectfully traversed. A person skilled in the art would recognize that reference character 12 is pointing to the slide rails. Nowhere in the application is the reference character 12 used in connection with a bracket.

Paragraph [0001] of the disclosure has been replaced to indicate the current status of each prior application mentioned therein and paragraph [0066] has been replaced to correct the four occurrences of the term "rod 422" to "rod 420".

The objections are believed to be overcome.

Claim 4 stands objected to because of the spelling of --tracked--. Claim 4 has canceled rendering the rejection moot.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Valentine.

Claims 3 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Valentine in view o Yamamoto.

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to recite, amongst other things, that each slide rail comprises a front slide rail and a rear slide rail, each front and rear slide rail has a forward end, a rear end and a bottom portion suitable for engaging the endless track, the forward end of each rear slide rail is pivotally connected to the rear end of its

respective front slide rail at a first pivot point, the forward end of each front slide rail being pivotally connected to a linkage, each linkage being pivotally connected or suitable to be pivotally connected to one of the chassis and the front drive axle at a second pivot point forward of the first pivot point.

It is respectfully submitted that Valentine alone nor in combination with Yamamoto neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 1 or 6 for the following reasons. Valentine discloses a front slide rail 71 pivotally connected to a rear slide rail 74. The front slide rail 71 is pivotally connected to the tubular member 51R and not to the chassis nor the front drive axle. The tubular member 51R is pivotally connected to the chassis at a point rearward of the pivot point between the front slide rail 71 and rear slide rail 74. Valentine is silent about pivotally connecting the front slide rail 71 to the chassis or the front drive axle because in order for the upward movement of the slide rail 71 to apply sufficient pressure to the air bag 41 throughout its entire range of movement, the slide rail 71 pivots with respect to the tubular member 51R which creates an upper wall for the air bag 41. Because the tubular member 51R is allowed to pivot with respect to the chassis about a rearward pivot 80, shown in Fig. 10, considering having the front rail 71 pivotal with the chassis or the front drive axle would at some point cause the link to have no effect on the air bag 41 because the tubular member is allowed to pivot upward away from the front rail 71. It is clear that the inventor intended that the front rail be pivotal with the tubular member 51R and move in unison about pivot point 80, because the link will always be in a situation to apply pressure to the air bag 41 no matter if the tubular member 51R is pivoting about pivot point 80 or not.

Yamamoto does not remedy the deficiencies of Valentine in that Yamamoto teaches having a front slide rail directly connected to the front drive axle. Yamamoto is silent about the use of a linkage and applying the teachings of Yamamoto to Valentine does not yield the invention as claimed in claims 1 and 6 in that attaching the front rail 71 of Valentine to the front drive axle would render the invention described in Valentine inoperative.

Claims 3, 8 and new claim 12 recite additional features of the present invention and are believed to be allowable with respect to base claims 1 and 6 and additional features found therein.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 102(b) and 103(a) are respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that all of the currently pending claims are allowable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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